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CATHOLIC ACTION AND THE FAMILY

Catholic Action is the watchword of the reign of Pius XI. Insistently has the call of His Holiness gone forth urging the faithful throughout the world to bestir themselves and take an active part in bringing about a renewal of all things in Christ, inciting them to do their share in effecting once more among the masses of mankind an application of Christian principles to the details of daily living. Leaders in many organizations have taken up the cry, convinced no less than is Pius himself that only through a whole-hearted return to the principles of Christ, only through a complete acceptance of the pure and undiluted doctrines of Christianity can the wounds of our stricken and troubled world be healed. Among the masses, too, is the call beginning to reecho. Faint though the reverberations may seem, they are none the less genuinely real and give proof uncontestable that an awakening is taking place, that a realization is dawning upon the people at large that the world is being scourged for its abandonment of Christ and that it can be restored to health and vigor, to peace and contentment only by a speedy and unhesitating return to Him.

It is not without special significance that among the first fields delineated for action by His Holiness was that of the family, that among the first of his wondrous messages to the world was the one dealing with Christian marriage, for marriage and the family are matters of the utmost moment to society. More than that, they are matters clamoring most urgently and insistently for constructive action today.

To argue the fundamental importance of Christian marriage and of sound family life would seem utterly unnecessary. The Catholic, at any rate, takes this importance for granted. He takes it that a sound Christian family life is absolutely essential to a sound Christian society or, for that matter, to any sound society. He looks upon the family as the cell of society, the heart of the social organism, and consequently realizes that a vigorous home life means a vital society, and that a decadent family life means a decaying social organism. He seems instinctively to sense the vital relation between the home and the entire social structure. This is also undoubtedly true in the case of many outside of the Church.

Yet in spite of this recognized importance of a wholesome home life, we have as a matter of fact failed in no small measure to build strong and vigorous families. Any reference, to the daily press, to legislative activities and current literature, to court calendars and criminal statistics will bear tragic witness to the fact that our family life is seriously sick at heart and that it is failing woefully in the ordinary functions that are rightly expected of it. The fact alone that Pius XI thought an Encyclical on Marriage addressed to the entire human race necessary is proof sufficient that Christian home life is in a very bad way. But the words of the Encyclical itself make

the matter unmistakably clear. "Not only do We," says His Holiness, "looking with paternal eye on the universal world from this Apostolic See as from a watch-tower, but you, also, Venerable Brethren, see, and seeing deeply grieve with Us that a great number of men, forgetful of that divine work of redemption, either ignore or shamelessly deny the great sanctity of Christian wedlock, or relying on the false principles of a new and utterly perverse morality, too often trample it under foot. And since these most pernicious errors and depraved morals have begun to spread even amongst the faithful and are gradually gaining ground, in Our office as Christ's vicar upon earth and Supreme Shepherd and Teacher We consider it Our duty to raise Our voice to keep the flock committed to Our care from poisoned pastures and, as far as in Us lies, to preserve it from harm."

No one, of course, would dare question that genuine Christian family life is being openly flaunted by thousands upon thousands today and that as the Supreme Shepherd has pointed out, even some of the faithful have come under the spell of the "new morality." And the results of this betrayal of Christ, the consequences of this rejection of His doctrine are apparent to all who care to see. Divorce, desertion, domestic discord, and childlessness are the order of the day. These have become utterly commonplace in our midst. They have become a part and parcel of our civilization. They are the moths that everywhere are weakening the fabric of society and are causing it rapidly to disintegrate. Thousands upon thousands of homes have already been totally disrupted. Thousands of others have been at least partially disorganized. And even in the case of the latter are parents failing in the primary functions of the home, the rearing and training of children. Already in his Encyclical on Christian Education did Pius XI call attention to this sorry plight. In no uncertain tones he condemned the "lamentable decline in family education" and pleaded with "pastors of souls" to do all in their power to correct the unfortunate situation.

There is every need, therefore, for action in behalf of the home. There is need for hard and painstaking effort if the havoc being wrought by the pagan ideals and the mechanized civilization of our day is to be definitely offset. There is need for concerted and organized action, indeed, for a vast and vigorous crusade if family life is to be restored to the exalted position that it held in an earlier day.

Conference on Family Life

It was a sincere conviction of this need that prompted the writer shortly after the publication of the Marriage Encyclical to pen the following lines: "Perhaps one of the most promising first steps towards the promotion of sound family life would be the formation of a conference group on the family and on parent education made up of the more capable students of these subjects. Indeed, such a group seems essential if suitable

guidance and leadership in this work are to be undertaken, if a fitting literature is to be developed and if the inspiration and enthusiasm for a determined and progressive movement are to be engendered. It is, in fact, very surprising that with so many national Catholic organizations in existence there is not one whose prime purpose is the promotion of the welfare of our domestic life. After all, but little can be expected from the efforts of even the most zealous and efficient organizations unless there is to begin with a sound family basis to work on. There are not a few scholarly leaders in this country who are fighting a valiant battle in behalf of Christian marriage and the family. But how much more effective and far-reaching their efforts would be if they would band themselves together into a conference for mutual counsel, for united effort, for inspiration and concerted Catholic Action for the good of the home."

An Official Publication

The suggestion made in these lines has since been acted upon. As pointed out elsewhere in the present issue of this publication, a group of scholars and representatives of various Catholic organizations, eager to promote the welfare of the Christian family, met during the past year and banded themselves together into a conference group to foster an organized Catholic Action program in behalf of the home. More than that, they urged other organizations to unite their forces with them in this common cause. Conscious, too, that ultimately genuine Catholic Action for the good of the home must come from the Masses of individuals within their respective domestic worlds, they sought to enlist the active interest and enthusiastic support of the average Catholic in this fundamental field of endeavor. And now with this publication, *The Catholic Family Monthly*, made available to them through the unbounded generosity of His Excellency, the Most Reverend John F. Noll, they feel that their efforts will be helped immeasurably, that a new and most far-reaching impetus will be given to their work. In dedicating it to the interests of family life, they take occasion to ask its readers to join with them in their crusade in behalf of the Christian family. They invite them to enlist the interest of others in this sacred cause. They urge one and all to unite with them in the program of action to restore the family to its position of honor and dignity that it held in an earlier and more Catholic day. They are not unaware, of course, that the task to which they have pledged themselves is a difficult one. They keenly appreciate the fact that all must help along if substantial results are to be realized. And above all, they are deeply convinced that God's strong arm must uphold and strengthen them if ultimate success is to crown their efforts. To them there is only one meaning to the words of Holy Writ: "Unless the Lord build the house they labor in vain who build it."—*Rev. Edgar Schmiedeler, O. S. B.*

THE RESURRECTION

"I am the Resurrection and the Life".

Would that the angel of the Resurrection could proclaim its significance to us! Human language is not equal to the portrayal either of its benefits or of its lessons.

One of the immediate effects of the Resurrection was the throwing open of the gates of Heaven to the human race. They had been closed against all mankind from the day of Adam's transgression. Hence there were Allelujas in Heaven on Resurrection Day. Another immediate effect was the releasing from the Limbo prison of millions of holy souls, among whom were numbered St. Joseph, St. John the Baptist, Lazarus and all the saints of the Old Law. Hence there were Allelujas in Limbo on that day. But the benefits brought to the redeemed of the Old Law were far less than those brought to us of the New Law, no matter how far removed we are from the year 33. Hence glad Allelujas are sounded on earth on each recurring anniversary of the Resurrection of Jesus.

St. Paul helps us to understand in a limited way the lesson of the Resurrection, when he says: "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive" (I Cor xv, 22); when he says: "By a man came death and by a man the resurrection of the dead." —and what solemn truths are told in these few words!

Jesus and Adam, as opposite poles, must be considered together. To understand our elevation through Christ we must understand our ruin through Adam. "By one man (the first Adam) sin came into the world, and by sin death, and death passed unto all men". By another man (the second Adam) grace came into the world, and by grace life, and life was placed within the reach of all men; "where sin abounded grace doth more abound". Hence, even though many of the consequences of original sin remain, Adam's fall has been a "happy fault" because of the character of the Redeemer it occasioned.

II

The first Easter day was preeminently Jesus' day, the "day which the Lord made for Him." Every other day of His life was "for us and our salvation".

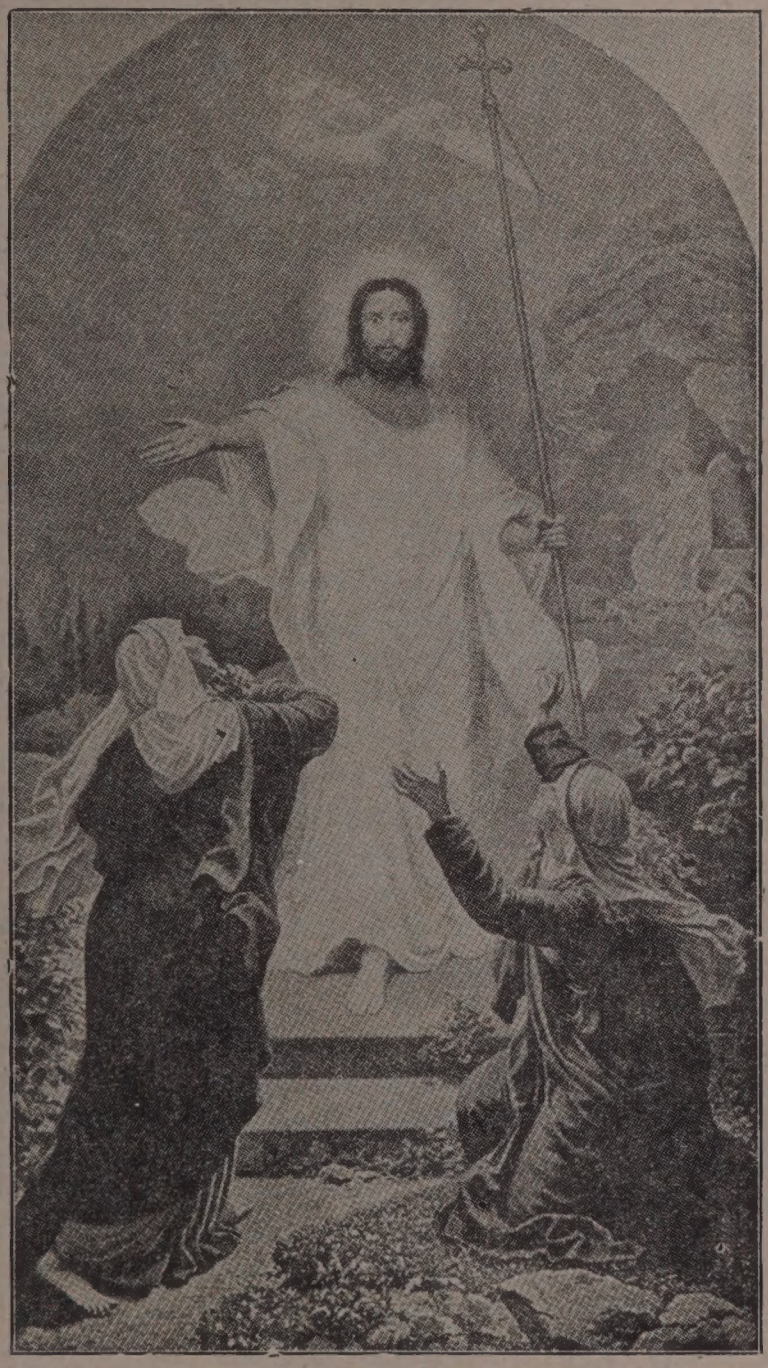
Follow Jesus from the cradle to the grave and you will note that every day among the thirty-three years of His life was our day. It was for us that He was poor in birth, weak in childhood, obscure in adolescence; that He was destitute and ignored; that He was homeless for three years, misunderstood and persecuted. It was for us that He was betrayed by His friends, maltreated by enemies and finally murdered so cruelly. No other life story can match His in sorrow or privation or suffering all the while He was undoing the work of the first Adam. His atonement ended only when, having bled to death on the cross, He declared: "It is consummated". When He died He conquered death; when He was buried He opened the grave for every human being.

Today we behold Him as such a conqueror, and we are overjoyed both for his sake and ours. His weakness has been converted into power; His obscurity into glory; His defeat into victory; His failure into success; His disfigured body into beauty.

Is it a wonder that the Church asks that we "rejoice and be glad" on this day, we the redeemed, we, who without Him would be without happiness in this life and without hope for the next? The extent of our rejoicing for the sake of Jesus will be measured only by our gratitude and love.

III

Jesus rises and stands not only over His own grave, but over the grave of every human being and declares: "I am the Resurrection and the Life"; "Why seek ye the living among the dead.". The Resurrection, therefore, preaches immortality for every one of us: "As in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be made alive". This means that life following death is as certain as death itself, and we know that there is nothing more certain. Those who remind us so frequently that we are hurrying towards death do not speak the whole truth.



Christ, risen from the dead, appears before Mary Magdalen and the other Mary

Every true follower of Christ can say that he is hurrying towards eternal life through death, the great fact

being not death, but life. Death, the fruit of sin, is not natural for an immortal being. It is something temporary, as is the whole period of man's life prior to death. The risen life, guaranteed to us by Christ's Resurrection, is eternal.

The Resurrection is the Church's ringing challenge to infidelity. Never has infidelity or skepticism successfully met it. The doubters and scoffers of every age who have refused to believe in the resurrection of the body were impelled thereto by fear. The resurrection, they are aware, is fraught with as many terrors for the wicked as with joys for the good.

The Church reminds us of the terrible as well as consolatory truth whenever she buries one of our dead. Quoting the Divine Master Himself she warns the mourners "the hour cometh wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."

Our divine Saviour wishes that His resurrection should be the classic argument in favor of His divinity, and therefore of His redemption, of the divine character of His Church, and of the means of salvation entrusted to it. This is why He allowed the fact of His resurrection to be so patent that only the unwilling could hesitate to recognize it. The well disposed person finds a hundred proofs for Christ's divinity in the prophecies He uttered, the many miracles He wrought, in the beauty of His teaching and in the holiness of His life. But when Christ Himself was asked for proof of His divinity He invariably referred to His resurrection. We are familiar with His words: "An evil generation seeketh after a sign, and a sign will not be given it, but the sign of Jonas, the prophet". When asked on still another occasion "what sign dost thou show us", He answered, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will build it up again". Again, "I have power to lay down My life and power to take It up again". When the Heavenly Father testified to His divinity on Tabor Christ did not want the fact heralded abroad. He enjoined strict silence on the three Apostles who witnessed it, "until the Son of man is risen from the dead". The transfiguration could be a corroborative argument, but must not be the chief argument of His divinity.

St. Paul goes so far as to say that Christ "was predestinated the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead." We are not surprised, therefore, to read in the Acts of the Apostles that "with great power the Apostles bore witness to the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ". We are not surprised to see St. Paul lay such emphasis on the fact of Christ's resurrection that he declared: "If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain and your faith is vain".

Easter's miracle, then, was intended to strengthen our faith just as Easter's principal lesson was intended to animate our hope. Jesus was

THE CATHOLIC HOME
"Erect In The Midst of Ruin"

Startling to many, forceful to all, there was, nevertheless, no aspect of novelty in the Encyclical of His Holiness, Pope Pius XI, on the subject of Christian Marriage. In its essence it is nothing more than a scholarly definition and reiteration of those fundamental principles upon which rests the sanctity of the home; a powerful exposition of the age-old doctrines which have thus far preserved the home and which, taken cognizance of, will continue to preserve it until the end of time. That the pronouncement created such a furor of excited discussion, however, is a sad but sufficient proof of the fact that outside the fold the very foundations upon which any true home must rest are very generally fallen into disuse and decay.

It was God the Father Almighty who created the home when He bade Adam and Eve "increase and multiply and fill the earth." It was He who preserved it through the darkness of the ages that preceded the coming of the Messiah, but it was God the Son begotten of the Father and born of a Virgin who raised the home above the level of a mere social institution and gave to it the imperishable and unalterable dignity of a Sacrament. His was the duty of restoring family life to its original exalted position in the divine scheme. Christ did more, however, than restore the pristine dignity of the home. He did more than merely restore the monogamous state. Marriage, under the blessing of His holy Hands, became not a sacramental but a Sacrament, at once the keystone upon which the living Church was reared and a sacred symbol of Christ's own mystical union with that Church.

An Unfounded Heresy

The Catholic home rests securely upon the Church's belief, Christ taught, in the sanctity of marriage and the intrinsic holiness of conjugal love. There is no more despicable or unfounded heresy than that which holds that the Church disapproves entirely of any form of love between sexes, and tolerates marriage only as a necessary evil in the scheme of the propagation of the race. Nothing could be further from the truth. In the eyes of unerring Mother Church not only is the natural and normal relation of man and woman free from any taint but it is revered as an essentially sacred thing. It is a far cry indeed, from the Church's reputed attitude of disapproving toleration of marriage to her real attitude which recognizes matrimony as a Sacrament endowed, even as are Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, with the power of giving its particular grace to the souls of those who receive it.

For the vast majority of those professed Christians without the portals of Catholicism, there seems to be no common ground upon which they can stand with the Church in regard to the home and family. The Pope's action in re-stating the principles of

the Catholic Church in the matter has been branded categorically as "presumptuous," as the product of "a tenth-century mind at work on a twentieth-century problem," as "absurd," as "unscientific," as "opposed to progress," and even as "the usurpation of an inherent right of man to decide such matters for himself." The refutation of these and similar critical inanities is so simple as to be relatively unimportant to us. What is important, however, is the logical conclusion to which we are forced by the evident surprise of a sophisticated world at the enunciation of such elementary principles as its point-blank disagreement with them. The condition which it indicates is obvious. Outside the Catholic Church, the ideal of the Christian home in its original form has, for all practical purposes, almost ceased to exist. Where it does live on it is built, not upon the rock-bed of truth, but upon the quick-sands of human opinion and fancy. Expediency has replaced morality as the measuring-rod.

What Is Opposed

In the Encyclical the Holy Father unreservedly commends conjugal fidelity, unity of feeling and of action, marital chastity, and the honorable obedience of wives to husbands of which the Apostle spoke when he said: "Let women be subject to their husbands as to the Lord, because the husband is head of the wife, as Christ is head of the Church." He condemns quite as emphatically and unreservedly the erroneous theories concerning wedlock which include a denial of the divine institution of matrimony, what the Holy Father terms "false naturalism," as well as adultery, abortion, sterilization, false standards of equality and liberty for women, mixed and secularized marriages, and all such vices as are inherently opposed to the proper and complete attainment of the ends of Christian marriage.

He is most insistent in his protestation against the so-called "new freedom" of women. Every argument advanced by the "progressive woman" in favor of complete equality of the sexes is incontestably rejected. His explanation of the attitude of the Church on the extent of woman's liberty is lucid and adequate. "This subjection, however, does not deny or take away the liberty which fully belongs to the woman both in view of her dignity as a human person, and in view of her most noble office as wife and mother and companion; nor does it bid her obey her husband's every request even if not in harmony with right reason or with the dignity due to a wife; nor, in fine, does it imply that the wife should be put on a level with those persons who in law are called minors, to whom it is not customary to allow free exercise of their rights on account of their lack of mature judgment, or of their ignorance of human affairs." But in his stand against the hysterical "feminism" of the day he is adamant. "But it forbids that exaggerated license which cares not for the good of the family; it forbids that in this body which is the family, the heart

be separated from the head to the great detriment of the whole body and the proximate danger of ruin. For if the man is the head, the woman is the heart, and as he occupies the chief place in ruling, so she may and ought to claim for herself the chief place in love."

Two Deadly Foes

But the burden of His Holiness' attack is, as well it might be, directed against the two deadliest foes of the home, contraception and legalized divorce. With them is his primary concern. Against them he has girded himself with the armor of truth, has armed himself with the effective weapon of authority, and has gone forth bravely to do battle.

In considering the subject of family limitation by a deliberate frustration of nature, the Pope has taken cognizance of the magnitude of this so-called present-day "problem." Not that we, as Catholics, will admit the existence of an actual problem. Where there is so distinct a separation between good and evil there can be no real problem. But to regard it as such is a conceit of a social order which, disregarding the objective norms of right and wrong, tries every case on the grounds of its conformity or non-conformity with its own selfish standards of social and economic expediency.

In solemn and impressive words the Holy Father condemns this detestable practice: "but no reason, however grave, may be put forward by which anything intrinsically against nature may become conformable to nature and morally good."

In the eyes of many of her adversaries the Church is regarded frequently as a too-strict mother of the faithful. Such views are hardly compatible with the facts. The Church recognizes the trials and sorrows which beset the paths of the virtuous man and wife, and mother-like, commiserates them: "We are deeply touched by the sufferings of those parents who, in extreme want, experience great difficulty in rearing their children." Nor is that sympathy a theoretical or disinterested thing. It is a fatherly act of commisseration out of which has taken shape a practical suggestion for the remedying of the regrettable condition. "Since it is no rare thing to find that the perfect observance of God's commands and conjugal integrity encounter difficulties because the married parties are oppressed by straightened circumstances, their necessities must be relieved as far as possible." This he proposes to do by so changing and bettering the present economic order by assuring to all a decent family wage as to release the poor married man from undue financial pressure.

Divorce Also Condemned

Divorce, the companion bugbear of contraception, is somewhat more briefly but quite adequately considered by the Holy Father, and as unconditionally condemned. He deplores the prevalent attitude of laxity concerning the indissolubility of the marriage contract. In his own words: "Many and varied are the

grounds put forward for divorce, some arising from the wickedness and guilt of the persons concerned, others arising from the circumstances of the case, the former they describe as subjective, the latter as objective; in a word, whatever might make married life hard or unpleasant."

With such a loose code of living there is neither temporization nor compromise. Where divine legislation is concerned there can be none. The voice of the Church rises strong and clear above the clamor of the crowd, strong and clear as a lighthouse bell above the fury of the storm, or the sound of a trumpet note amidst the confusion of the peoples of the world. "Opposed to all these reckless opinions, Venerable Brethren, stands the unalterable law of God, fully confirmed by Christ, a law that can never be deprived of its force by the decrees of men, the ideas of the people or the will of the legislator. 'What therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder.' And if any man, acting contrary to this law, shall have put asunder, his action is null and void, and the consequence remains, as Christ Himself has explicitly confirmed: 'Whosoever shall put away his wife and shall marry another, committeth adultery.' " Moreover these words refer to every kind of marriage, even to that which is natural and legitimate only. For, as has already been observed, that indissolubility by which the loosening of the bond is once and for all removed from the whim of the parties and from every secular power, is a property of every true marriage.

It is these evils, the worst of which are contraception and divorce, or rather the general acceptance of these evils, which has devastated the world. For the pillage and the sabotage and the decadent unloveliness that everywhere surrounds us, the world is itself responsible.

It is adherence to the fundamental principles which oppose these evils that has preserved in great measure the Catholic family and the Catholic home. And so long as these two rest securely upon those fundamentals—and that must be until the end of time—the Catholic family and the Catholic home will stand "erect in the midst of ruin."—*Katherine E. Fitzpatrick.*

MARTYRDOM FOR ALL

The faith, the charity of the first ages, they are not too much for our age. Evils equally great must have an equal remedy. The earth has gone cold, and it is for us Catholics to reanimate the vital heat which is being extinguished, to recommence the era of the martyrs. For to be a martyr is a thing within the reach of all Christians. It is to give our lives for God and for our brothers; to offer them in sacrifice, whether the sacrifice be consumed all at once as a holocaust, or be accomplished slowly and smoke night and day like incense on the altar; to restore to Heaven all which Heaven gave us—our blood, our gold, our soul entire.—*Frederic Ozanam.*

THE DISINTERGRATING FAMILY

One needs but to look about to observe the continuous disintegration of the family and of family life. Many factors have been and are operative in bringing about this change. Change is inevitable but in the past century change has been proceeding not in an orderly evolutionary manner but in a revolutionary way. Great indeed have been these cultural changes which not only have affected fundamental social institutions but also each and every member of society.

In the Middle Ages the family existed as a well integrated unit. The condition of the times, of course, had much to do with that. Society then was relatively stable. The cultivation of the fields was the work of the masses; the feudal lords of that day giving their attention to the cultivation of the fine arts.

Science, commerce and industry as we know it today were relatively feeble cultures. Transportation was slow and laborious; hence movement from place to place was practically out of the question and contact with the outside world was greatly restricted. Towns were small and cities few—the hamlet and village were typical social centers of that day. In these small communities family life was thoroughly organized and integrated. In fact, the community pressure, the very culture of the day, kept the home stable. All this made for family unity and group solidarity.

Marriage a Sacrament

In the Christian family the bond was further strengthened through the theology of the Church and the philosophy of Christianity. First of all the Church from its inception taught and upheld the unity, indissolubility and sanctity of marriage. The vocation of the married state was elevated to the dignity of a sacrament. The union of man and woman as husband and wife was made an image of the union of Christ and His Church and as firm and indissoluble. Pope Leo XIII expresses this ever so clearly when he writes: "This union of man and woman, that it might answer more fittingly to the infinitely wise counsels of God even from the beginning manifested chiefly two most excellent properties—deeply sealed, as it were, and signed upon it —namely, unity and perpetuity." The philosophy of Christianity also bettered and protected the position of wife and children. The autocratic power of the husband and father was tempered with charity and justice. Though the husband was to be the head of the domestic society, yet the personal dignity of the wife was ever to be respected. And, too, the fundamental rights of the child were safeguarded at all costs though the duties of honor, affection and obedience on the part of the child were strongly inculcated.

Because of the times and the culture of the day all the different family bonds—affectional, industrial and economic, recreational, authoritative, educational, protective and religious welded the domestic group into a close unity.

Strange Philosophies

Upon this scene of domestic unity and tranquility came strange philosophies and industrial unrest and change. Though the industrial change of the past and present century is usually credited with being the chief factor in the social revolution which has taken place it is the doctrine of individualism and the philosophy of rationalism that have been most instrumental in fostering social and familial disintegration.

This doctrine of individualism placed self first and becomes almost identical with selfishness. This individualistic spirit penetrated all of society and society has indeed felt its disintegrating effects. Church and state were both affected by this canker eating from within. The Reformation owes its origin to this as does the *laissez-faire* policy of government and of industry. It is not strange, therefore, that in philosophy Rationalism should rear its head. All this individualistic behavior was to be made rational or reasonable. It did without doubt lead to that expressed by the more modern term, namely, rationalization of conduct, which is a highly individualistic explanation given to others, or to still the voice of one's conscience, for one's irrational acts.

It was in this atmosphere that the industrial revolution took place. Disintegration of the more stable culture of an agricultural people was bound to follow as the trek to the industrial centers commenced and the doctrine of individualism and rationalism was imbibed and accepted. It was not long until the family felt the full impact of all this. Divorce, ever made easier to obtain, was the first outward evidence of the impending disaster to family unity. As the laissez-faire doctrine gained adherents, exploitation of the weak at the hands of the strong became the order of the day. "In all things charity" ceased to have meaning. Self-love, not the love of God and neighbor, was stressed. It was inevitable, therefore, that the family life should suffer greatly and distintegrate.

Family Life Encouraged

Catholic family life, unquestionably, has not suffered to the same extent as it has among those outside the fold, yet it behooves us to be ever vigilant lest we, too, be completely engulfed. The Holy Father, ever mindful of his duty as Shepherd, bids us take heed while still there be time and in the Encyclical on Marriage addresses the whole human race on this most important topic, confirming and making his own the encyclical *Arcanum* of Leo XIII, but expounding more fully certain points called for by the circumstances of the times.

Last Labor Day, there was organized The Catholic Conference on Family Life, the general aim and purpose of which is the promotion of the welfare of the family and the encouragement by every means within its power of wholesome and successful family life. One of its first acts was to express to His Holiness deep gratitude for his Encyclical on Marriage and to affirm that this authori-

tative document shall be the unfailing guide in all of its efforts for the betterment of family life. The Conference went on to state that it "earnestly recommends its (Encyclical on Marriage) further dissemination and more careful study by Catholic and non-Catholic alike."

Not only has the Holy Father written an Encyclical on Marriage but also one on Christian Education and the Conference further went on record condemning as a perversion of the natural order of things modern efforts to make the merely supplementary educational agencies take the place of the home itself and pledged itself to make it one of the chief aims and most active interests to foster a well-founded and thoroughly Catholic Parent Education program.

Here then is an organization which with your help,—for only then can there be hope for success,—aims at recreating and developing a genuine interest in Catholic Family life.—*Henry C. Schumacher, M. D.*

Spiritual Practices and The Family

In the passing on of religious traditions we Catholics in the modern world—and more especially we in the very modern United States—are confronted with an entirely new difficulty. In other times, and even now to a certain extent in other places, there was a certain reliance on the prevailing atmosphere that resulted from a solidly Catholic public opinion. Even among Protestants the basic dogmas of Christian belief were generally taken for granted and as a result environmental circumstances, custom and habit could be relied upon to beget and nurture the thoughts of responsibility and destiny inculcated by the Gospel.

In those days the picturesque and imaginatively beautiful practices of Catholic piety developed naturally as an expression of what was cherished in the soul. But this is true no longer. It is now necessary to artificially cultivate them as a defense against the coldness and spiritual drabness of the definitely worldly and skeptical atmosphere of the general public.

It should be one of our main purposes in this country to keep alive where they exist, and to create where they do not, the distinctive outward practices and devotions which are so stimulating to individual piety and which have such possibilities as "apologetic" for our spiritually starved fellow Christians.

Catholic Atmosphere Needed

With due encouragement and guidance thousands of Catholic parents would gladly make the effort necessary to develop in their present homes that Catholic atmosphere which served not a little as the co-efficient of divine grace in giving them a deep appreciation of their faith.

In the best Catholic families many of these practices are still cultivated. Morning and evening prayers may no longer be in common as of yore, but there are many homes in which the rosary is still recited by parents and children at an evening hour suitable to all.

The presence of religious pictures, of crucifixes and statues is still the rule rather than the exception. And one of the advantages of modernity in this regard is the possibility of nearly all having representations of this kind, pictures and symbols that are not merely signs of piety but evidences of taste as well.

The beautiful associations of the May season are still quite commonly represented by the practice of erecting a May altar in the home with a statue of the Madonna to which the children bring their offerings of flowers.

The peculiar loveliness of the Catholic Christmas practices of the old world, their novelty in the new world, are strikingly brought out in one of Miss Cather's early novels. The Christmas tree with the Christmas crib are part of it. Even the much abused tradition of gift-giving can be made of great value. When properly made use of it can do much to develop and maintain a fine Christian feeling among relatives and friends.

Some families still make a great feast of First Communion and Confirmation days, giving the children extra festivities on these occasions. Families with Latin traditions make much of the feast of the patron saint or name day.

The radio also has its uses. Excellent Catholic programs can be tuned in. There are frequent occasions such as the papal broadcast, the burial services of King Albert, etc., when children can be made to see strikingly the greatness and world-wide prestige of their Church.

The custom of having a new house blessed is still in some measure adhered to. It is a practice that has great appeal to Catholics and is well deserving of universal observance.

Through these and many other practices families might again be surrounded with a truly Catholic atmosphere in their homes. The result would be greater happiness in the home, greater family love, firmer allegiance both to the creed and the code of the Church. The cultivation of such practices would be a much more efficient form of Catholic Action than many of the forced and artificial growths that now pass as such.—*Rev. John K. Cartwright.*

THE ROSARY

To say the Rosary is to open the flood-gates of grace, to honour Mary Our Queen, and to glorify Jesus Our King. It is a school of love where we hold sweet converse with Mary and Her Son, learn to admire their virtues, and yield to the charm of their example. It is the key to the treasure-house of gifts and graces of which Mary is the custodian.—*Mother Mary Philip, I.V.B.M.*

QUESTION BOX

Readers will send questions of general interest to Parish Monthly, Care Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, Indiana.

What benefits does membership in the Catholic Conference on Family Life carry with it?

Membership in the Catholic Conference on Family Life gives the individual the opportunity to join hands with his fellow Catholics in the cultivation of perhaps the greatest field for Catholic Action today, namely, the Christian family. It enables him to unite with his co-religionists in a common effort to promote again a wholesome and successful family life in this country, to join forces with them in a vast and inspiring crusade to restore the Catholic home to its pristine glory. Members are kept informed regarding the activities of the Conference through its publication, its programs of forthcoming meetings, and other official notices. They receive copies of all booklets dealing with topics on family life and parent education published by the Conference. So far as more strictly spiritual benefits such as indulgences are concerned, these are to be derived from the Association of the Holy Family, a simple religious organization which the Catholic conference on Family Life seeks to promote on a diocesan and parish basis. (Consult also Aims and Methods of the Conference, page 32.)

What is a good definition or explanation of prayer?

Prayer as an act of the virtue of religion is the lifting up of the mind and heart and soul to God, to adore, praise and thank Him for aid. It is an implied exercise of faith, hope and at least initial love. Vocal prayer is the recitation of a set form; mental prayer is interior, and made without the use of a given formula. Prayer is necessary for salvation, the victory over temptation, the practise of virtue and the perseverance in grace. It is the ever possible and ready means of grace prescribed by God as the acknowledgment of God's sovereignty and man's utter dependence on Him. Prayer which man makes for himself will certainly be heard if the proper things are asked, and the prayer is made with attention, that is, without wilful distractions. Prayer should be sincere, humble, confident and persevering. Private prayer is made in one's own name; public prayer is made in the name of the community. Liturgical prayer is the official prayer of the Church and is found in the Mass and Breviary. The Spirit of prayer consists in the appreciation of the excellence, the conviction of the necessity, and confidence in the power of prayer. There are many beautiful prayers approved by the Church for both public and private devotion. The most perfect prayer is, of course, the "Our Father

If a Catholic girl marries a non-Catholic man by a minister and lives with him a number of years and then he dies, can that woman go back to the Catholic Church and receive Holy Communion?

This Catholic girl may and should

come back to the Catholic Church if she wishes to save her soul. Her return to the Church is, of course, dependent on her repentance for her sins. If she is truly sorry and has a firm purpose of amendment, she may be absolved from her sins and the excommunication she incurred when she attempted marriage before a non-Catholic minister.

If the Catholic Church is the true Church why are so many people prejudiced against it and why do not more people join it?

The reason why many people do not join the Church is that they have never considered the claims of the Church in their entirety or they have approached the study with minds full of prejudice or hearts full of sin.

More people are kept out of the Catholic Church by prejudice than by intellectual difficulties. The Jews who were looking for a political Messias found it hard to accept the meek and humble Jesus, Who was continually prophesying His Death on the Cross. They might admit His miracles but they denied their proving power, ascribing them to the devil. The same prejudice against the supernatural will make a rationalist today admit as a fact a well-authenticated miracle at Lourdes, but deny its proving power by ascribing it to some unknown law of nature. A Methodist or Baptist who has been taught from childhood by parents whom he loves and by teachers and friends whom he respects that the Catholic Church is an unreasonable,unscientific, unscriptural, superstitious, intolerant and foreign system of priestly imposture, must fight courageously the prejudices of a lifetime before he can weigh carefully the divine claims of the Catholic Church.

Christ and His Apostles tell us that worldliness and sensuality frequently blind men's minds to the light of truth. Our Lord said: "The world has not known Thee, just Father." St. Paul wrote: "The sensual man perceiveth not those things that are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him and he cannot understand." Even fairly good living people at times find it hard to see the force of the Catholic claims because they realize that conversion will mean for them the loss of an inheritance, the estrangement of relatives and friends and the blighting of their political ambitions. On the other hand we can point to thousands of converts who are coming to the Catholic Church every year, from paganism, unbelief and Protestantism at the cost of sacrifices that often amount to a practical martyrdom. But the happiness which they find in the Truth repays them for the sacrifices they have to make.

Does the Church sanction sin for the sake of Science and Progress. Here are four gods, Science, Power Gold and Progress, in which there is no sin. Is the Church afraid of being called anti-progressive?

The Church cannot sanction sin for any reason. There is only one God, in Whom there is no sin; some of those "gods" you enumerate sound suspiciously like Mammon. The Church is not afraid of, or of being

called anything. She has been called a good many names in the past nineteen centuries!

Would you please print a sketch of Therese Neumann of Konnersreuth, Bavaria, who is supposed to be a saint? Also about her miracles.

Because of limited space this sketch must of necessity be brief. Therese Neumann was born at Konnersreuth on April 19, 1898. She is the eldest of ten children. As a child she had a deep appreciaion of the sufferings of Christ. The Way of the Cross was one of her favorite devotions. She hoped to enter a Benedictine sisterhood which labors among the heathens of foreign lands.

On March 10, 1918, while aiding the villagers to extinguish a fire which had broken out in a neighbor's house, Therese injured her spine and collapsed. By 1919 she had lost her eyesight, and suffered partial paralysis which grew worse so that by 1922 she was unable to take solid food.

Therese had great devotion to the Little Flower. On April 29, 1923, when the Beatification of the Little Flower took place, Therese Neumann's sight was restored. Gradually she was relieved of her sufferings and on May 17, 1925, the day of the canonization of the Little Flower, Therese Neumann's paralysis was cured.

On February 16, 1926, Therese's eyes began to bleed for the first time, and gradually the stigmata or the marks of Christ's wounds began to appear until by 1927 they appeared on her hands, feet, head and side.

Therese now experiences visions of the Passion of Christ in which she takes a most personal and sympathetic part. This occurs from Thursday midnight until Friday afternoon about one o'clock. These visions consist of a series of ecstasies during which, while she is apparently dead to all worldly contact, the panorama of the Passion passes before her mental vision in dreadful reality, painfully reflected upon her countenance, in successive periods of from fifteen to twenty minutes. Each period is followed by a complete relaxation during which she recounts in simplest language what she has seen.

She has apparently been given many extraordinary gifts. She can discern relics; when she repeats the words of Christ she speaks in perfect Aramaic of Christ's time, though she is an uneducated German girl. She has not taken food since 1926; and since 1927 has taken no water, living only on the Holy Eucharist which she receives daily. In spite of this she has never lost weight.

Therese has been examined by many scientists, Catholic and non-Catholic. Except for those who were hostile atheists, all have testified that there is no natural explanation for the phenomenon of Therese Neumann's life.

Though her pastor testifies that she leads a very holy life, it is improper to refer to her as a saint. In her genius of conservatism the Church made no official pronouncement on this strange phenomenon. Some day if she perseveres, the Church may de-

clare Therese Neumann a saint. Until that day we must not anticipate the judgment of the Church.

What is the explanation of Therese Neumann's life? Bishop Schrembs in a foreword to a book on her life says her own simple answer is "that the world may know that God still lives and that by vicarious suffering and intercessory prayer, she may bring back souls to God."

OUR SUNDAY VISITOR, Huntington, Ind., publishes a very interesting pamphlet about Therese Newmann which can be obtained for only ten cents. It is written by the Most Rev. John F. Noll, D. D., and recounts a visit he made to Therese's home in Konnersreuth.

Don't you think it will be very unfair for those who die on the Last Day, for as there will be no Purgatory they will have no chance of being cleansed from their sins and getting into Heaven?

This is a matter which may be safely left in God's hands. Still, on that dread day men "will wither away from fear." It may well be, therefore, that the sufferings entailed will be so intensive as to be equivalent to another's protracted Purgatory.

Would two Catholics acting as witnesses at the marriage of a Catholic woman to a Protestant in a Protestant Church before a Protestant minister be committing grave sin?

Certainly: they are taking part in the service of a non-Catholic religion; they are conniving at (and therefore are accessories in) the grievous sin of the Catholic party; they are giving grave scandal.

Catholics say Peter went to Rome and was crucified there. The Bible does not tell us that he went there, so where is their proof?

This objection is so played-out that I merely quote the saying of a non-Catholic on the matter, Whiston, who writes in his *memoirs:* "That St. Peter was at Rome is so clear in Christian antiquity that it is a shame for any Protestant to confess that any Protestant ever denied it.

If a person committed a murder would he be guilty of further sin if he refused to surrender?

He would not be obliged to give himself up to justice unless an innocent person were suffering for his crime; on the other hand, he is bound not to resist the officers of the law in arresting him.

When a Protestant couple are received into the Church are they bound to be married again?

No.

In making the Nine First Fridays, must you have each time you go to Holy Communion the intention of gaining the grace of perseverance and of receiving the Last Sacraments before dying?

No. The general intention of receiving Holy Communion on the First Friday for nine successive months in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus suffices for the gaining of the blessings promised by Our Lord to the saintly Margaret Mary.

S. O. S.

"Before reading to you the weather forecast, we have here . . . ."

"Since you insist on knowing the truth, I must tell you that there is no hope of your recovery."

The doctor spoke the words painfully, for the person to whom they were addressed was his friend as well as his patient. The propped up man heard them without flinching, and answered in a perfectly unemotional voice.

"Thanks, John. In that case perhaps you'd be good enough to tell me about how long I may expect to live."

The other hesitated a moment. His interlocutor sensed the meaning of the pause, although his eyes were no longer clear enough to distinguish his friend's facial movements.

"About a week?"

"At the outside," was the doctor's response.

There was a dead silence after this, except for the ticking of the huge marble clock that stood upon the carved mantelpiece, measuring out, minute by minute, as it were, the final moments of Philip Blane's allotted span.

The specialist looked at the sick man, whose fine physique was apparent even now. He and Blane had been friends for a number of years, yet he knew singularly little about the other's early life.

"Have you any relatives, Philip?" he asked suddenly. Blane did not answer at once, and when he did it was in an obviously controlled voice.

"There is only one I should like to see again, Jim," he said, "and that's my son."

"Your son?" The doctor's voice betrayed his astonishment.

"I expect you're surprised to know I've got a son, as no one about here knows. But I have—or had—as I haven't seen or heard of him for fifteen years. It was the usual story. Father and son pulling opposite ways, and neither willing to give way. I wanted him to come into my business, learn it, and be able to manage it so that he could come after me and carry it on. But the young fool wouldn't. Said he had no ambition, and that he felt he wasn't cut out for a career such as I could offer him. We had several rows, and one day I told him to get out, and he did."

The sick man paused a moment, and then went on:

"That's all over and done with now. I've always said that I never wanted to set eyes on him again, but lying here has given me time to think. And now that I know that my hours are numbered, I should like to see him once more before I go."

"Have you any idea where he is?" the other man asked.

"None," was the reply. "The last I heard of him he was in New York. I don't suppose there's much chance of tracing him, but I'd be deeply grateful to you if you'd try, Jim. His Christian name was Paul, and he'd be about thirty-five now, if that's any help."

The pleading look in the dying man's eyes made the doctor determine to do his utmost to gratify the wish of his friend.

"I'll do my best," he said, as he rose to leave.

Left alone, Philip Blane's thoughts began to wander. The death sentence just pronounced on him had left him singularly unmoved at the time. But now, deep within him, an unpleasant sense of foreboding began to manifest itself.

A Catholic in his early years, he had gradually renounced his religion. It had interfered with his plans and his ambitions to succeed. Big business deals—the ones that spelt success in commerce—could not always be brought off if one stuck to catechism maxims. Such deals sometimes needed a little manipulation that wasn't quite orthodox, according to religious teachings. And so gradually, as he progressed, he had shaken off the shackles of his Faith. The troublesome voice of conscience he had stilled by liberal doses of modern scientific reading, and his misgivings slowly gave place to quiescence, as he studied more deeply the specious proofs adduced by modern thinkers in refutation of such "out of date" ecclesiastical dogmas as heaven and hell.

After his first qualms had gone, there had been no difficulty; and he soon came to believe that the theologians' God was a myth, and that death was almost certainly complete annihilation.

Thus it was that he had refused to see the local parish priest, who had somehow contrived to find out that he was a Catholic, when the former had called upon him at the commencement of his illness. He had no use for priests now, he told himself, and forbade his butler to admit any to the house.

These thoughts all passed quickly in retrospect over his mind as he tried to still the disquieting voice within him; other thoughts that would keep creeping into his mind; unpleasant thoughts that kept saying, suppose you've made a mistake . . . that there is a God . . . and a hell . . . and a judgment, after all.

Philip Blane tossed about uneasily, and tried to concentrate on other things.

The last sounds of Big Ben's final stroke reverberated into the mists of the great metropolis.

The controlling engineer at Broadcasting House waited for the echo to die away, and then switched on to the News Studio. A moment later the clear-cut voice of the announcer sounded in his earphones:

"This is the National Broadcasting company. Before reading to you the weather forecast, we have here an S. O. S. Will Paul Blane, last heard of in New York, go at once to his former home in Baltimore, where his father, Philip Blane, is lying dangerously ill?

"The weather forecast for tonight and tomorrow . . ."

The doctor was doing his best.

Twenty-four hours later found

Philip Blane a little weaker, but still mentally alert. At that moment he was alone, at his own request. He had been passing through a strenuous time. Again and again had he quieted, as he thought, the inner voice, that kept recalling him to his early conceptions of God. He doggedly reiterated in his mind the old argument which had decided him in his agnosticism. Yet somehow they lacked now the power of conviction they had in his day of health.

God. There was no God. The evil in the world, the disease, the misery, they all pointed to the fact that there was no God. Yet how did the world come about? Could it have come without creation? He remembered that the "scientific" theses on this matter had always been of the vaguest kind . . . the results of mechanical combinations and interactions of matter . . . The phrase, memorized from some modern work, came into his mind, and its unsatisfactory nature suddenly appeared more apparent to him than it had done before.

Supposing that there was really a God? Then He should show Himself to you, his old sceptic self asserted. And as He hasn't, are you going to believe in what your senses belie? Despite these considerations, it was in vain that he tried to dismiss the disturbing reflections. The untenability of disbelief was gradually, but surely, forcing itself upon him.

He tried to divert his mind. He resolutely veered his thoughts round to his long absent son. If he could only see him just once again! With the passing of what he knew were numbered hours, his longing had given way to a passionate yearning to set eyes once more on the flesh of his flesh.

And then, quite suddenly, he found himself doing something that he hadn't done for years—something which he had laughed to scorn during recent times. Philip Blane voiced a silent prayer.

His mind, defying all his calculated judgments, was mentally invoking aid—Aid to find his son before it was too late.

At that critical moment the bedroom door opened.

The sick man turned his head half expectantly towards it, only to feel his hopes give place to anger as his failing eyes discerned the newcomer to be a priest.

"How did you get in here?" he demanded harshly of the visitor. "I gave instructions that I did not want to see any priests."

He snapped the final word out venomously. The intruder stood unabashed, and replied in a gentle tone:

"So your butler informed me. Please don't blame him, as I practically forced my way in. As a priest I have a duty to a Power which transcends all such orders. You are a Catholic, and dying. I have come to help you make your peace with God."

Blane glowered resentfully at the clerical clothes.

"I don't need your God," he said;

"your God cannot even grant a dying man's wish. I have no use for Him. Get out and leave me alone!" But the priest did not move.

"How can you expect Him to grant favors to one who denies Him recognition?" he asked in a quiet, measured voice. The sick man laid back on his pillow and remained silent. The force of the other's words had gone home. Nevertheless, his deeply instilled convictions were not easily cast aside.

"I cannot believe," he said. "I asked Him to bring me back my son, so that I might see him again before I die. He hasn't done it. Let Him do that, and I will believe."

The priest approached the bedside and bent down over the occupant. "He has done it," he said softly. "I am your son."

The little churchyard gradually emptied itself of mourners. The young priest glanced for the last time at the polished plate upon the coffin, his eyes lingering lovingly upon the words "Fortified with all the rites of Holy Mother Church." Thank God, he had been in time! And, having breathed forth this prayer, he turned away.—*Francis Hunt.*

SINGLENESS OF HEART

The bed of our heart is too narrow; it is not capable of holding both God and the world. If we be friends with it, we must be the enemies of God. And still, as we begin to love it, it begins to leave us; for it quickly passeth away, with all its concupiscences.—*Thomas Carre.*

THAT LONG AGO

Out of that blue, far off, dear long ago
Sail back to me my dream-ships—memories—
And anchored in my heart, these argosies
Lure me to their rich and fragrant cargo.

When I board them, rapt in reverie,
I greet the joys and smiles of other years,
Dark sorrows, partings, sighs and sunny tears;
And each one lingers lovingly with me.

Sounds—pictures—some from out a dreamy mist:
A mother's tender, crooning lullaby—
A father gaily tossing me a-high
Too happy and too breathless to resist.

Oh, much I love these old, old thoughts, these flowers
Still fragrant of a rosy yesterday.
They must not leave me, ever with me stay,
Nor die with me in Death's last parting hours.

But I shall take each flower, each memory;
Each smile shall smiling be, each tear a smile,
To laugh with me in that long afterwhile,
To sport and play in God's eternity.
—Rev. Raphael O'Malley, O.S.B.

ON CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS

"Oh, Mrs. Brown, is Jimmy going to have a birthday party?"

And the neighborhood terror is paving the way towards keeping his social calendar filled.

"Not this year, Sonny. No parties for a while."

"I'm going to have a party, Mrs. Brown, and I'm going to ask Jimmie to my party."

But even this doesn't work. No parties. At least not what Sonny would call parties. One would think that I was the hard-hearted ogre of a parent, sacrificing the simple childhood joys to my own convenience. Far from it. I adore parties, and on Jimmie's birthday, whisper it gently, we are going to have a party—a grand one—favors and nut-cups, snappers and paper hats, ice cream and a cake ablaze with candles. And the guests are going to be Mummy and Daddy and young brother Leo, Auntie Blanche and Uncle Frank and Susu, the affectionate form of Grandma. Jimmie will sit at the head of the table, and we all will pull snappers and wear paper caps and laugh hilariously and be children at his party. His face will be wreathed in smiles. His joy will be something to behold—something to kindle a celestial fire in our adult hearts. Leo will look proudly at "my brother Jim" and picture himself in the place of honor six months hence. When the glow from the candles is reflected in that beaming six-year-old face, we will think of sun-sets and benedictions and everything lovely and heaven-born.

After the feast there will be games. Father will bring the horse shoes and Auntie Blanche will play the piano for All-Around-the-Mulberry Bush. Neighbors passing will see the gay lights and hear the gay sounds and step more lightly to the echo of the merriment. We have been having these parties for some time now—on every birthday. They punctuate our year so joyfully. They make us so happy and proud of Our Family. These special feast days of ours—these anniversaries that mean so much. Nothing can ever take their place.

Did you hear of Johnny King's birthday party? Poor little Johnny! My heart ached for him. His day! The day when all things should have centered around him—the day when he should have received and radiated all happiness! And it ended in his being sent off to bed in disgrace before all his guests!

After the invitation list had been clipped and revised and clipped again, there still were twenty little guests—boys and girls— and at that, the little Millers stood at the gate and looked in with longing eyes. O the heartache of being left out! The look in those eyes just ruined the day for me. I remember interceding for them but Elizabeth King was adamant.

"Good gracious, Mary, you've just got to be hard boiled. If I let those little Millers in I'd have to have the Cookes and the Morrisseys, too. Twenty is absolutely all I can manage. Their mother ought to know

better than to let them come oggling through the gate that way."

The party progressed hilariously. Paper was torn off gifts recklessly.

"Let's see, Johnny, What did Jean bring you?"

"Oh, a book."

"Say, you've got that book haven't you, Johnny?"

"That's a swell holster, Johnny. Can I take it for a little while?"

"Look at the tie, Johnny. It's from Billy Noonan. It's the one he got for his birthday."

"No, it isn't, either," with emphasis from Billy's older sister who knows what's what socially. "It's one just like it but it isn't IT. So there!"

Tails were pinned on the donkey. Games of Blind Man's Buff and Drop the Handkerchief were organized. Always poor Johnny was being told "No, dear, it's not your turn yet. You are the host.

The last straw was the cake. Of course there were two cakes. Aunt Harriet made a chocolate cake and Lois' mother sent in the most exquisite angel food you ever saw—pale pink icing and a tracery of green leaves and pink rose-buds and candles. It was just lovely! I remember Jimmy saying to me, "Oh, Mummy, it looks just like a wedding cake!" And of course that would be the first cake to be passed. Little Lisbey O'Connor grabbed two pieces, one in each hand. Her shocked mother remonstrated but Mrs. King, the perfect hostess, said, "Don't worry her, Margaret. Let her have them. They won't hurt her any. Anyway this is a children's party. You're not even supposed to see what's going on. You like the pretty cake, don't you, Lisbey, dear?"

I somehow knew then and there that tragedy hung in the air. Johnny had one eye on the cake plate and one eye on Lisbey. The last piece of his rose-bud cake vanished just before the plate reached him. Did he go for Lisbey and try to snatch one piece of cake from her? Hands squeezed into fists on the soft, gooey cake, and the fists shot out and landed blows, hit and miss. Johnny was dragged up by the collar. Elizabeth King was furious—outraged—at the primitive behavior of her small son. She insisted that Johnny apologize and Johnny wouldn't. He was sent in shame to his room, the children all eyeing him as he shuffled out, his tear-smeared face bent down toward his little heaving chest. I shall never forget it. My heart bled for him. The sense of gloom and tragedy and injustice in that small heart—and on his own day, too. No such parties for me and mine. No outsiders are going to come shouting, crowding in between my Jimmie and me. No forced etiquette and wrangles and apologies and heartaches that always go with such parties. Our parties are destined to knit us as a family closely together. They take us as a unit out of the everyday and humdrum and raise us to the plane of rare and exquisite pleasure. For a few precious hours we are so grandly, joyously exclusive. We—Ourselves —The Family!—*Susan Reansbury.*

The Christian Family and The Liturgy

The family is the germ-cell of the social body, the unit of Church and State alike. As healthy germ-cells mean a healthy organism, so good Christian families mean the welfare of both Church and State. They make for prosperity and holiness in the Church of God on earth. As the germ-cells in the mystical body of Christ, the Church, they must share the life of the Church, and that life is the liturgical life.

Unbelief, with its accompanying evils of divorce and birth control, and the various modern forms of amusement have done much to ruin family life in general. They have, unhappily, also left their mark on our Catholic family life and loosened its bonds. When the saintly Pius X undertook to "renew all things in Christ." he turned to the Liturgy as to the chief means for accomplishing this end. He calls it "the primary and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit" and sees "a close connection between the Liturgy and the sanctification of the faithful." To the Liturgy, then, we must likewise turn, if we would renew the Christian family spirit.

The Mass and the Family

The center of the liturgical life of the Church is the Mass. Mass and holy communion must also be the center and source of a healthy Catholic family life. At Mass in the parish church the family renews its youth Sunday after Sunday; here it worships and prays as a group, a social unit: father, mother and children partake together of the table of the Lord. There is no stronger family tie than that of a common faith and the common liturgical exercise of that faith.

The liturgical table prayers connect the daily family meal with the Eucharistic table and with the heavenly banquet awaiting us in our eternal home.

The Church sanctifies the hours of the day with common liturgical prayer, called the Divine Office, which is performed by priests and religious throughout the world in the name of and for the welfare of all the faithful. Christian families should daily unite their intentions with those of the Church and join the universal Church at prayer by saying their morning and evening prayers in common within the family circle. For this purpose the Church's own short and beautiful morning and evening prayers should be used.

"The Mystical Body"

The Christian family is the mystical body of Christ in miniature. The father of the family is head of that body and holds the place of Christ; the mother is the body itself or the Church; and the children of the family are the members of that body as they are members of the Church. The father is Christ, the mother is the Church, and the children are the faithful within the family circle. The children look up to father and mother with the reverence with which they are to regard Christ and His Church; the parents on their part are to be mindful of their dignity and

love the members of the family "as Christ loved the Church." These are not merely beautiful, poetic figures of speech, they are truths which are clearly contained and expressed in the Church's Liturgy.

By using the Liturgy, an intelligent Catholic father and mother will make their home a little church and their family a liturgical community; they will create an atmosphere in which true Catholic family life will flourish.—*Rt. Rev. Martin Veth, O. S. B.*

Our President's Spiritual Outlook

The following is the text of a letter addressed by President Roosevelt to Col. Brasted, Chief of Chaplains of the United States Army:

The Great Teacher said: "I come that ye may have life and that ye may have it more abundantly." The object of all our striving should be to realize that "abundant life."

The supreme values are spiritual. The hope of the world is that character which, built upon the solid rock, withstands triumphantly all the storms of life.

To build this exemplary character is our great task. Without it the abundant life cannot be realized, and the best citizens and best soldiers of a country are those who have put on the armor of righteousness.

Chaplains of the military and naval services and clergymen everywhere who by word and life are advancing the cause of idealism and true religion are doing a commendable work, one that is absolutely essential to the life of the nation.

We commend this brief message from the President as a succinct statement of the aims of Catholic education. It would be well for you to place it before you, to check yourself by its terms from time to time. Or you might re-cast it in this form:

1. The life of Christ is the abundant life, the life of grace, fed by the Sacraments and prayer:

2. The supreme values are spiritual, and eternity is their measure. "How will this be if I die today?" That question will determine values. Strong character will result if you use it to determine conduct.

3. Idealism, not sophistication and its resultant pessismism, makes for progress in the right direction. Choose good companions, guard your reading, spend long hours before the Blessed Sacrament if you would keep your ideals high.—*Notre Dame Bulletin.*

LESSONS OF ADVERSITIES

Adversities teach us and assist us to hold the balance just. In consolations anyone may be valliant; but in great trials, in bitter tribulations, then it is that can be distinguished the virile souls from those which are timid, cowardly and enervated.—*St. Paul of the Cross.*

CHILDREN'S CORNER

MY ROYAL HERO— ST. ALOYSIUS

Three fine horses came trotting along the castle grounds of King Philip II of Spain. They stepped high and gracefully. Their coats were shining. Their heads were erect. They seemed proud of their riders.

And what splendid young riders they were! They wore glistening satin suits. Their hats had a feathery plume hanging over the left shoulder. They sat straight in their saddles and handled the reins like men. But they were only boys—Prince James and his companions, Aloysius and Ralph Gonzaga.

The boys had just finished their morning lessons and were now having their exercise.

Suddenly Prince James asked, "Why are you so quiet today, Aloysius?"

"Oh, I'm just thinking," Aloysius answered.

"Thinking about what?" his brother asked.

For a minute Aloysius did not answer. Then he said quietly, "Thinking that I'm going to be a priest."

"A priest!" both boys exclaimed.

Aloysius laughed. "You look surprised," he said.

"But Father brought us here to be pages," Ralph exclaimed. "We are to learn to take our places in court. He won't want you to leave."

"I know it will be hard for Father and Mother. But when they know all about it, they will let me go. You can take my place as eldest son, Ralph."

"Where will you go to study?" asked Prince James.

"I am going to be a Jesuit. So I shall go to Rome, I suppose."

The other boys were quiet now.

"There's nothing to be sad about," Aloysius said laughingly. "We should all be happy."

He turned his horse quickly. "Race you back to the tower. One—two—three," he called.

The three boys were off like a shot. Their gay plumes were blowing in the breeze. Their horses' feet clattered on the brick road. The boys shouted gayly.

Aloysius reached the tower a minute before the others.

He dismounted and stroked his horse's fine head. He rubbed his cheek against the smooth coat.

The others dashed up laughing. Aloysius felt a little sad, himself. Soon he would be far away from his companions. He knew he would miss them and their fun together. Still he was anxious to begin his work for God.

That very night he wrote to his father about his plans. His father was a great nobleman. He lived with the rest of his family at another castle in Spain. He was the master of the Castle of Castiglione.

When he read what his son had written he was not pleased. He hurried to see Aloysius.

"My son," he said, "You are my

heir. Some day you will be master of Castiglione. You will be wealthy. You can be a very great man. Already your tutor has told me of your good lessons. Stay here, my boy."

"I'm sorry to disappoint you, Father," Aloysius answered. "But you will soon understand that I must go. God has called me. Ralph can take my place here. He will make a good master for the Castle of Castiglione."

Father and son talked for a long time. At last the father saw that Aloysius meant what he had said. He must go.

Ever since Aloysius had received his First Holy Communion he had longed to study to be a priest. Now at the age of thirteen he set out with his father for Rome. Soon he began his studies in the Jesuit monastery there.

Sometimes Aloysius was lonely. He missed his brother and his friend, Prince James. He missed his lively rides and games on the castle grounds. He was lonesome for his mother and father. But he would not give up his new life for everything in the world.

Aloysius no longer wore beautiful shining suits. Now he wore a long black gown of rough wool. He had become a Jesuit student.

He worked hard at his lessons. Soon the priests and the other students saw what a brilliant student he was.

Years passed by. Aloysius' student days would soon be over. The time was drawing near for him to be ordained a priest. His superiors said, "Aloysius will make a wonderful priest. He will bring many to God."

At this time a fever broke out in Rome. Many were dying every day. The hospitals were not big enough to hold all the sick. Public halls were turned into hospitals.

One day the superior of the monastery said to the students and priests, "We must do what we can for these sick people. Who will offer to help care for them?"

Aloysius was one of the first to offer. That very day the superior and those who had offered to help, set out for their new work.

Some of the poor sick people were huddled together in little huts. They had nobody to care for them. Many of the people who were well were afraid to go near the sick.

But Aloysius was not afraid. He went into the poorest huts. On his shoulder he carried the sick out to hospitals.

He never thought of his own aching back. He kept on working every day until he could no longer keep his eyes open. Then he would sleep a few hours and be ready for work again.

The sick people in the hospitals watched for Aloysius' visits. He cheered them up. The children who were getting better called to him, "Aloysius, Aloysius, tell us a story."

And, busy as he was, Aloysius would stop to laugh and talk with the little ones.

One day his superior was going through the hospital. Aloysius was

coming towards him. The superior saw Aloysius totter. He noticed his burning cheeks.

"Aloysius," he said, "you must go back to the monastery and go to bed. You are sick."

Aloysius had the fever. He was very sick. The students and priests in the monastery prayed that he would get better. The people that he had cared for prayed hard for him, too.

At last he began to improve. One day he begged to be taken to the chapel. The students carried him out.

Every day after that he sat before the Blessed Sacrament. He was happy there.

Aloysius never got strong again. His companions in the monastery were very sad.

Aloysius would smile at them.

"Don't be unhappy. I am happy," he would say.

And he was happy. He knew now that he would soon be in Heaven.

After three more months of suffering, Aloysius Gonzaga died, when but 23 years of age. But soon people began to see that his work was not over. They prayed to him, for their sick and their sick became well. Cripples threw away their crutches and walked erect. Others began to live better lives and to love God more.

Soon his fame spread to other countries. Everywhere people began to cry out, "Saint Aloysius, pray for us!"

And all were helped. God was giving Saint Aloysius blessings to send to the needy. And forever and ever God will keep on giving to His royal hero.

NOW YOU TELL ONE—

It was the young lawyer's first case, and he was bubbling over with pride and enthusiasm as he stood in court.

"Now," he said, addressing the defendant, "you say you came from Sydney to Melbourne merely to look for work? I put it to you there was another, a stronger, motive that brought you all this distance!"

"Well," hesitated the defendant, "there was—"

"Ah!" cried the lawyer triumphantly. "And what was it?"

"A locomotive!"

* * *

Irate Farmer: "I thought you told me you had ploughed that field?"

Ploughman: "No. I said that I was thinking about ploughing it—I've merely turned it over in my mind so far."

* * *

Eager Playwright: "I wish I could think up a big, strong situation that would fill the audience with tears."

Theatre Manager: "I'm looking for one that will fill the tiers with audience."

* * *

"The great men are all dead," she said, with evident regret.

"But the beautiful women are not," he replied, looking earnestly at her.

"Of course," she added, after a moment's reflection, "I always except present company."

"So do I," he replied.

THE CATHOLIC CONFERENCE ON FAMILY LIFE

The Catholic Conference on Family Life was organized on Labor Day, September 5, 1933, at Mundelein College, Chicago. The organization meeting was called by the Rev. Dr. Edgar Schmeideler, O. S. B., director of the Family Life Section of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, Social Action Department, and was attended by a group of Catholic scholars and by representatives of a number of general Catholic organizations.

AIMS AND METHODS

The general aim of the Catholic Conference on Family Life is the promotion of the welfare of the family, and encouragement by every means within its power of wholesome and successful family life. Among the more specific objectives of the Conference, and the methods of carrying them out, are the following:

1. Studying and disseminating the principles of Christian marriage, particularly as set forth in the Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Marriage.
2. Developing and disseminating a popular and an advanced literature on the Family and on Parent Education.
3. Fostering the establishment of the Association of the Holy Family.
4. Promoting a Catholic Parent Education movement that will emphasize all the various phases of child training within the home—religious, social, physical, mental and moral.
5. Holding an annual national conference and also regional conferences and institutes as circumstances may prompt and permit.
6. Encouraging the formation of local autonomous conferences.
7. Fostering the development of Study Clubs dealing with Family topics.
8. Promoting lectures, radio talks, the writing of articles for Catholic and other publications, as well as releases for the press.
9. Cooperating with other Catholic agencies and organizations both at home and abroad in their praiseworthy efforts in behalf of the home.
10. Participating in sound secular movements that have as their purpose the betterment of home life. (Such are, for instance, movements for better housing, for proper recreational facilities, etc.).
11. Encouraging the development of Catholic leaders in this field, particularly by urging that due provision be made in our higher schools for courses on Christian Marriage and the Family, and on Parent Education, and by the encouragement of voluntary Study Clubs in our educational institutions.
12. Fostering the development of an interest on the part of Catholic young people outside the school system in Family study through such media as sodalities or other young people's organizations.
13. Opposing legislation inimical to sound family life and lending support to such laws as give genuine promise of proving beneficial to the family.
14. Showing an active interest in the promotion of social justice, particularly in matters that touch upon the family.
15. Encouraging by whatever means lie within the power of the Conference the following activities:

a. The custom of common family prayer within the home.

b. Religious instruction of children within the family circle.

c. Renewal of marriage vows on anniversaries of marriage and on the Feast of the Holy Family.

d. The custom of having religious articles such as holy pictures and crucifixes in the home.

e. Urging the teaching of the hardy virtues such as fortitude, self-sacrifice and self-control to the children at home.

f. Preparing children for their own future family life.

g. Providing good reading within the home and keeping out harmful literature.

h. Celebrating within the family circle occasions such as birthdays, names' days and First Communion days of the members of the family, as well as special feasts such as Christmas, Easter and the Holy Family.

i. Promoting recreational activities within the home.

j. Fostering other home interests.

OFFICIALS

The following are the officers of the Catholic Conference on Family Life:

Honorary President—Most Rev. Francis Johannes, D. D.

Honorary Vice Presidents—Mr. and Mrs. William J. Hanrahan.

President—Henry C. Schumacher, M. D.

Executive Secretary—Rev. Edgar Schmiedeler, O. S. B., Ph. D.

Treasurer—Elizabeth B. Sweeney.

Vice Presidents—Mathilda Baronowski, Burton Confrey, Ph. D., Rev. James Fogarty, C. S. C., Ph. D., H. A. Jules-Bois, Anna E. King, Rose J. McHugh, Rev. Jerome Merwick, O. S. B., Miriam Loughran Rooney, Ph. D., Margaret Sullivan, Ph. D.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Rev. John K. Cartwright, D. D., pastor of Immaculate Conception Church, Washington, D. C.

Katherine Fitzpatrick, Grass Point, Mich. Article from **St. Mary's Chimes**, Notre Dame, Ind.

Rev. Raphael O'Malley, O. S. B., a religious of St. Benedict's Abbey, Atchison, Kansas

Susan Reansbury, Miriam Loughran Rooney, Ph. D., member of faculties of Loyola University and Mundelein College, Chicago.

Rev. Edgar Schmiedeler, O.S.B., Ph. D., director of the Family Life Section, N. C. W. C. Social Action Department, and **ex officio** executive secretary of the Catholic Conference on Family Life, Washington, D. C.

Henry C. Schumacher, M. D., director, Child Guidance Clinic, Cleveland, and president, Catholic Conference on Family Life.

Rt. Rev. Martin Veth, O.S.B., Abbot of St. Benedicts Abbey and president of St. Benedicts College, Atchison, Kansas.